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GENERAL

1. USSR proposes two conferences of foreign ministers:

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[Redacted]

The Soviet note of 28 September, as summarized by the US embassy in Moscow, answers the Western suggestion for a four-power conference on German elections and an Austrian treaty with a proposal for two conferences of foreign ministers.

One would be a five-power conference including Communist China to consider means of lessening international tension. The other, a four-power conference on the German problem, would consider "all proposals raised in the course of preparation of the conference." The note states in conclusion that no answer has been received to the 28 August Soviet note on Austrian and says that the USSR is willing to consider the question "in usual diplomatic channels."

Comment: By proposing two conferences, the Soviet Union has clarified its note of 4 August which created the impression that it would talk about the German problem only at a five-power conference, and that such a conference must first discuss the lessening of international tensions. The USSR is attempting to leave the agenda of the German meeting as well as that of the five-power conference wide open and at the same time avoid the Western precondition that free elections be discussed first.

The note suggests continued stalling tactics on the Austrian question, probably in an attempt to gain Western acceptance of Soviet terms through diplomatic channels before committing the USSR to discuss the issue at a conference. The Western powers considered that their note of 2 September, to which the USSR is now replying, was an answer to the Soviet note of 28 August.

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4. Thai resent lack of American support in UN election:

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A member of the Thai delegation to the United Nations indicated on 25 September that because of American failure to support Prince Wan for the presidency of the General Assembly, Thailand's support on colonial issues could no longer be counted on. He said that from now on the Thai intend to work more closely with the Arab-Asian bloc.

Meanwhile, a Thai cabinet minister informed an officer of the American embassy in Bangkok that his government considered the US attitude to be "a slap in the face," and stated that the king was bitterly disappointed.

Comment: Thai resentment over this issue is concentrated among the few top officials who completely dominate the formulation of Thailand's policies, and who are quite capable of attempting to make their displeasure felt. It is not likely, however, that this attitude foreshadows any drastic revision of Thailand's pro-Western orientation.

SOUTH ASIA

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5. India refuses to accept Battle Act provisions as binding:

The Indian government, though prepared not to ship any IA items under the Battle Act, has no controls on certain IB items and is

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actually exporting some of them, according to the secretary general of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The secretary general believed Prime Minister Nehru could not agree to the United States' request for prior notification of any change in the situation. He urged that since senior Indian officials are now thoroughly aware of the implications of the Battle Act, the United States let the matter rest for a few months.

Comment: This statement, following Nehru's earlier refusal to promise advance notice of the shipment of strategic materials, indicates that no formal guarantee of any kind can be expected from India. It is possible that shipments of IB items to Communist China and the Orbit will increase as a result of the Korean armistice.

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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

7. Comment on the status of Anglo-Egyptian negotiations:

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Cairo's public airing of the details of the informal negotiations over the Suez base may be a device to test popular reaction before the regime finally commits itself. In

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inviting public reaction, the government points up the existing differences, thus indicating that last-minute concessions may have to be made. Should public sentiment strongly oppose any part of the agreement, the Nagib regime could still hold out for better terms.

The premature release by the Egyptians, on the other hand, tended to put the British government on the spot, forcing it to make a similar announcement. Failure or undue delay in solving the dispute can still be blamed on London.

EASTERN EUROPE

8. Arrest of Polish cardinal reliably reported:

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report
the arrest on 25 September of Cardinal Wyszynski and Bishop Choromanski, secretary of the Polish episcopate. In the official Polish Communist daily newspaper of the same date, politburo member Ochab attacked the cardinal for violating the church-state agreement of 1950 and "sabotaging" the understanding with the government.

Comment: These arrests will evoke a strong reaction among the people. Despite relentless attacks by the regime over a long period of time, the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, with the adherence of over 90 percent of the people, has retained its organizational strength.

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